



# Hiring

## About this Topic: Hiring



### Topic Mentor

#### Linda A. Hill

From her more than 20 years of extensive field work, professor Linda A. Hill has helped managers create the conditions for effective management in today's flatter and increasingly diverse organizations. She is a professor and chair of the Leadership Initiative at Harvard Business School. She is also the author of the best-selling *Becoming a Manager* (Harvard Business School Press), now out in paperback.

Linda served as the content expert for *Coaching for Results* and *Managing Direct Reports*, two award-winning interactive programs from Harvard Business School Publishing. She also served as a mentor for many Harvard ManageMentor topics.

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## What Would You Do?

### What would you do?

Frank was plagued by indecision. He had to choose between two very qualified, yet very different, applicants for a job at MotionTech. He had been leaning toward Jeanette, the slightly less experienced candidate, who had demonstrated a developing talent in certain skills over the past two years. And she came from an informal culture similar to MotionTech's. Frank's colleague, Mary, saw more potential in Chad, the other candidate. She was impressed by his record of high performance, and liked the fact that his old clients were big fans who would follow him to his new job. It didn't bother Mary that he came from a more structured culture. Frank wondered which were the most important attributes to look for in a candidate.

### What would you do?

One tool that Frank might use to compare these candidates is a decision-making matrix. To create a decision-making matrix, he should list the candidates along one side of the grid and the job requirements across the top. Frank should then decide on a scoring system to use to rank each candidate's fit with the job requirements. The next step is to fill in the matrix using the notes he took during the interviews. After that, Frank should check each candidate's references. If the decision on whom to hire is not clear by the end of this process, Frank might want to schedule second interviews with the candidates.

In this topic, you'll learn how to recruit a diverse pool of qualified candidates, prepare for and conduct a successful hiring interview, and follow up with an appropriate offer.

Hiring decisions have long-term repercussions. How can you make sure that you pick the right person for the job?

## Topic Objectives

This topic helps you:

- Recruit a diverse pool of qualified candidates
- Prepare for an effective hiring interview
- Conduct a successful interview, focusing on how to open, maintain, and close the interview
- Follow up with an appropriate offer

## Disclaimer

This topic provides information of a general nature regarding hiring practices. It is not intended as legal advice regarding hiring practices and should not be viewed as a substitute for legal consultation regarding hiring processes, generally, or specific individual situations.

## The importance of effective hiring



Hiring good people is one of the most significant contributions you can make to your organization. Good hiring decisions create a foundation for more effective performance by you, your team, and your company. Conversely, bad hiring decisions drag down performance and are expensive and painful to correct.

## Leadership Insight: Hiring a top team

It was a very difficult period for Pace when I first joined. The company was in crisis. On the one hand we were trying to manage the financials of the company and make sure that we had enough cash to continue to trade and make payroll. At the same time, I had to build a new team. This is when chief executives start to earn their money because on the one hand they have to

manage that, and on the other, they have to be selling the visions to shareholders, to staff, to customers, to suppliers.

And also, when you want to start to try and hire real talent into the company, how do you do it against such a backdrop? So we had to be very clear that I was serious about the vision and that the people I was trying to hire understood the opportunity. The other thing, to build a great team, there's no point in putting people around you who are worse than you. You have to bring in people who are better than you — better in their areas of discipline and who can bring a whole new view to the group. That's what a team is about, it's about bringing in and harnessing more talents that can give you a better result and better decisions.

So I went about doing that. It's one thing to choose talent, but it's a team, so you have to choose personalities that are going to give you spread. Because again, there's no point in having personalities like your own, because then you've just got more of you.

So you need people with different ways of thinking: lateral thinkers, vertical thinkers, people who are more human-oriented, people who are more operational. You need to choose that blend.

So I went out to find the right talent and the right people. One of the things, when you go out to find great talent, is they tend to be good leaders, strong, opinionated people — which is good, and a very healthy thing. The key is harnessing that into a team where they can really work together and pull together.

And so they have to all buy into the vision and the culture and the direction of where you're going to start to make that happen. But don't think this was an easy task.

And again, as a chief executive, you've got to make some tough decisions sometimes, to make sure you put first and foremost the harmony of the team and the team's capability of delivering, rather than superstar individuals who cause disruption.

I had one situation where two of the people I trusted most among my team, for delivery and absolute excellence, really didn't get along very well. They were fighting. One didn't believe that the other had the talent. The other believed the first was empire building. So what do you do in that situation?

So I sat them down and I said, "Right. Here's the thing. I absolutely value both of you. The company is so much better with the pair of you here. But, one of you is going to have to go unless you figure out between you how to make this work, because from where I'm sitting, I have to have a team. But I love the pair of you, so you need to sort it out."

And they did. And not only did they sort it out, they worked extremely well together, because the one who thought the other one wasn't talented realized that he was, and the other one who thought he was empire building realized that he wasn't. And now we have a very strong team.

At the same time, one of the people that I hired, he never made it. He didn't turn out to have the talent. Now, in some organizations, the chief executive might feel, "Well, I brought him in. I'm going to look a bit foolish if I let him go." But it had to be done, because it sent the right message to the company, that the team is the most important thing, and that we will only have the best people working in the organization.

And the results that we had from then on — across the organization, in motivating staff — were extremely strong. In the staff satisfaction survey, consistently to date, the top marks are usually given to the executive team because people trust them, and rate them because they're passionate and lead in a very good, solid way.

Harness collective intelligence into a team that can really work together.

## Neil Gaydon

Chief Executive Office, Pace Plc.

Neil Gaydon is Chief Executive Officer at Pace Plc., one of the world's leading developers of digital television technology for the pay TV industry. Pace is the world leader in high-definition set-top box technology and a key player in the move toward technology convergence for entertainment throughout the home.

Neil joined Pace's board of directors in 2002 and was appointed CEO in 2006. In 2008 he led the company through the acquisition of Royal Philips Electronics, a set-top box business, doubling the company's size. During his time at Pace, Neil also served as Director of Worldwide Sales and Marketing and President of Pace Americas, establishing the group's U.S. operations.

Prior to working at Pace, Neil spent over 12 years as a Senior Executive in the hi-fi industry. He is also active in the local community as a board member of the Bradford City of Film.

## Key Idea: The hiring process

### Key Idea

Hiring involves careful thought about what the position you're filling entails, what characteristics are required to carry out its responsibilities successfully, and who would make a good candidate. You'll be more likely to hire the right person if you work closely with your human resources department during each step of the hiring process, which comprises these five phases:

1. **Define the job requirements:** Before you start the search, it's critical that you understand what the job involves and the education, skills, experience, and personal characteristics that are needed to perform it.
2. **Recruit promising candidates:** Once you know what the job requires, you need to find candidates who have the necessary qualifications. The best way to find qualified candidates is to get the word out using your professional connections and recruiting resources.
3. **Interview:** Conduct interviews with the most promising candidates so you can learn more about their abilities and experience, as well as whether they will be a good fit with your organization. Interviews also provide you with an opportunity to "sell" the position and the company and give job candidates the information they need to make an informed decision.
4. **Evaluate the candidates:** Once all candidates have been interviewed, the people involved in the hiring decision must conduct an objective evaluation of each candidate.
5. **Make a decision and offer:** The last step of the hiring process is making the decision and extending a job offer. Always aim for the individual who can contribute the most to your organization's success.

Each of these phases helps you further refine your candidate search.

Knowing the hiring process can help you hire the right person. What are the steps involved in this process?

## Key Idea: Determine the ideal "fit"

### Key Idea

Before you can hire the right person for the job, you need to understand what the job involves. You also want to determine what will make for a good "fit" between an individual's skills and personal attributes and the requirements of the job and the organization. There are four factors that will help you define the job and its requirements:

- **Background characteristics**, such as educational background and past experience
- **Personal characteristics**, such as creative abilities and decision-making style
- **Organizational structure**, such as hierarchy and management
- **Culture**

To get a sense of the primary responsibilities and tasks, begin by asking the question, "What does the employee have to do in this job?" If you are looking to fill an existing position, you can often answer this question by reviewing the current job description. If you are hiring for a newly created position or if a job description does not exist, you will need to spend time learning about the job function and talking with those who will interact with and/or rely on the person who holds this position.

Different types of jobs require different types of employees. How can you make sure that you find someone who will make a good "fit"?

## Background characteristics

When you think about a candidate's background, the two major factors to consider are education and experience. Determine if a specific educational background is truly necessary for the job. Sometimes, you may find you can be flexible and substitute a certain educational background and degree with relevant experience.

- Base the experience requirements on a thorough analysis of the specific tasks and responsibilities the position entails. Distinguish between the type and level of experience that are absolutely critical for the job and those that are beneficial but not essential. Determine whether the organization can afford the time needed for on-the-job learning for a strong candidate who lacks some of the experience requirements.
- Consider if you want someone with industry experience, functional experience, and large- versus small-company experience. Note that industry and functional experience are particularly important for externally oriented positions requiring knowledge of products and competitors.

## Personal characteristics

“ If each of us hires people who are smaller than we are, we shall become a company of dwarfs. But if each of us hires people who are bigger than we are, we shall become a company of giants. ”  
–David Ogilvy

Personal characteristics indicate how the candidate will approach the job and relate to coworkers. Evaluate these personal characteristics relative to the tasks and responsibilities you've listed for the job opening:

- **Analytical and creative abilities:** A candidate's abilities in these two areas determine how he or she assesses problems and comes up with new approaches to solving them. Does the job need a problem solver, or someone who is comfortable working within established processes?
- **Decision-making style:** The way people make decisions is very individual. Some people are extremely analytical and rely on facts, while others rely more on intuition. Some make decisions quickly, while others ponder them for a long time. Some depend on consensus, while others seek their own counsel. It is critical to determine whether a particular style is required for success in the job and, if so, what that style is.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Interpersonal skills and behavior are intimately connected; that is why understanding a candidate's interpersonal skills is an important part of the hiring decision process. To determine which interpersonal skills are most appropriate for a given position, think about the set of tasks that will be performed in the position. Which traits would translate into good performance, especially in view of the superiors, peers, and direct reports with whom the person will interact? For example, an effective controller might be patient and formal, demonstrating careful, cautious, detail-oriented behavior. For a sales manager, high extroversion and informality might be desirable.
- **Motivation:** A candidate's goals, interests, energy level, and job progression often demonstrate his or her level of motivation. If the position calls for a high degree of independence, you might look for goal-oriented, high-energy, or self-directed candidates.

## Organizational structure

In addition to thinking about candidate attributes that match the specific job requirements, you need to widen your perspective and consider how a candidate will fit in with the organization as a whole. Think about how your organization is structured and try to determine what characteristics would be a good fit with the environment.

For example, is your organization hierarchical and formal or less structured and informal? Some candidates might not function well in an informal and less structured environment, while others may indicate that a limited structure fuels their creativity.

## Culture

It's also important to think about the culture of your company. Culture defines an organization's way of doing things, general values, and the ways in which people relate to one another. The culture of an organization displays itself in factors such as how people dress, if they restrict conversations to those of a professional nature, or if people tend to work in teams or independently. Think about the culture of your organization and how it might be described in terms of employee attributes.



## Leadership Insight: The right stuff

If you get the right person in the door in the first place, you increase the odds of keeping him or her. It makes total sense. And by the way, when I say "right person," I don't mean a clone of you, the manager. I mean the right person given the skills, the job requirements, the culture, et cetera.

So I'm going to give you an example. Southwest Airlines — they are famous for the way they go about selecting, the way they go about interviewing the candidates. I talked to an airline pilot who was hired by Southwest Airlines who could attest to their very, very interesting process.

They put him through a series of interviewers, the "beauty parade," if you will. And what people were looking for were his attitudes, his beliefs, how he interacts with people. They even checked to see: "Is he fun? Is he funny?" Do we need a funny pilot? I don't know. But this is one of the things they look for in terms of fit in the culture.

Fast-forward six months later. I was getting on a Southwest Airline's flight, a couple got on right ahead of me and realized they'd forgotten the baby's bottles. They had the baby, but no bottles, and they were panicked.

And they looked down on the tarmac and they saw the blue suitcase sitting the tarmac and they said, "That's where the bottles are!" The pilot overhead them. The pilot ran down the stairs, ran over to the luggage rack and was pointing. They're pointing "yes, yes" at the blue suitcase. He's pointing. He opens the blue suitcase, he finds the baby bottles, he comes racing back up the stairs, and the whole plane bursts into applause.

Now how many pilots will frankly run down on the tarmac to retrieve a baby's bottle? This is part of what Southwest Airlines is looking for — this ability to leave arrogance on the back burner, this ability to interact with people in this kind of a manner.

So it's very, very important who you're hiring, who you're bringing in the door.

Look beyond a job candidate's credentials and be sure to hire someone who is a good fit for the organization's culture.

**Sharon Jordan-Evans**  
**President, Jordan-Evans Group**

Sharon Jordan-Evans is a pioneer in the field of employee retention and engagement.

She coauthored the Wall Street Journal bestseller "Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay" with Beverly Kaye, which is now in its fourth edition and has been translated into 20 languages.

Her follow-up book, "Love It, Don't Leave It: 26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work," also became a Wall Street Journal bestseller and has been translated into 15 languages.

Sharon runs a consulting company, The Jordan Evans Group, where she coaches high-performing executives and speaks to audiences about



engagement and retention.

As a corporate coach and keynote presenter, she works with Fortune 500 companies such as AMEX, Boeing, Disney, Monster, Lockheed, and Sony. Her Web site is: [www.jeg.org](http://www.jeg.org)

## Develop a job description

Once you understand the position's requirements, you are ready to create a job description. A job description outlines the job responsibilities, reporting relationships, hours, compensation, and credentials needed. It will allow you to explain the job both to potential candidates and to any resources you might be using to help you identify candidates. In some cases, your organization may have a required format or standard job description to use as a model, and you may need to have certain aspects of the description, such as salary, approved by the human resources department. Your job description should include the following:

- Job title, business unit, organization
- Summary of the job tasks, responsibilities, and objectives
- Hiring manager, reporting manager
- Compensation, hours, location
- Background (education, experience) required
- Personal characteristics required

## Sample job description

Remember, creating a job description is also an opportunity to redesign a job, not just to fill the current one.

For example, the last person who held the position might have had a strong strategic focus, and you may decide you now need a more hands-on manager. Develop the job description accordingly.

### Sample Job Description for a Senior Accountant

Date:	October 1, 2007
Position Title:	Senior Accountant
Hours/Location:	Monday – Friday, 9:00 – 5:00; Watertown office
Compensation:	\$70,000 – \$75,000

	<b>annual salary</b>
Department:	<b>Finance</b>
Reports To:	<b>Assistant Director, Finance</b>
<b>Summary:</b> (summary statement/brief overview of position)	
As a member of the accounting team, support the management of the company through timely and accurate reporting of financial information and analysis of our inventory position.	
<b>Key Responsibilities:</b> (specific key duties/responsibilities of position)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to an accurate and speedy close through completion of account reconciliations and other actions as required.</li> <li>• Liaise with product business groups and partner-distributors to analyze operational information and create worksheets used to post journal entries to the general ledger.</li> <li>• Ensure accurate transfer of data from the perpetual inventory system to the general ledger, determine that the system is functioning properly and recommend system improvements. Implement cycle count procedures during cycle counts to determine correctness and recommend improvements.</li> <li>• Assist with licensing processing as required.</li> <li>• Liaise between outside distributors and internal departments for sales data, and perform analysis of data to ensure accurate and reliable information.</li> <li>• Reconcile selected accounts to the appropriate subsidiary ledgers and perform</li> </ul>	
account analysis to ensure appropriate	

adjustments are recorded.

- Prepare segments of the annual audit work paper package as assigned, in an accurate and timely manner.
- Special projects as assigned.

**Requirements:** (education, experience, communication/organization skills, work environment, etc.)

- College degree, preferably in Accounting or Business Administration.
- 2 to 3 years of progressive responsibility in general accounting.
- Excellent interpersonal skills as well as the ability to communicate well both verbally and in writing.

## Recruitment channels



Accessing qualified candidates is critical to the success of your hiring effort. You will want to get the word out through as many channels as possible to increase the number of applicants in your candidate pool. However, you should also select targeted, relevant channels to ensure that the proportion of qualified candidates in your pool is as high as possible. Typical channels include:

- Recruiting agencies
- Newspaper ads
- Referrals from colleagues
- Trade publications
- Professional associations
- Networking
- Colleges and universities
- The Internet (recruitment Web sites and your company's Web site)
- Job fairs

Signaling inclusivity when you communicate your policies, benefits, and mission statements can help ensure a diverse candidate pool. In addition, you can:

- Enhance the "pipeline" through programs like internships and partnerships with colleges, universities, and community organizations
- Establish effective college recruitment programs
- Encourage personal referrals from current employees

## Screen résumés

The cover letter and résumé are the candidate's first introduction to you, and their content should convey the qualities you are looking for. Note that e-mailed submissions may be less formal than traditionally mailed résumés or provided in a format specific to an online recruiting agency.

When you have a large number of résumés to review, use a two-step process to make your task more manageable. In the first pass, eliminate the résumés for those candidates who clearly do not meet the education and experience requirements that you previously noted as being essential for performing the job. Examine specific aspects of the résumé, such as:

- Signs of achievement and results; for example, profit orientation, stability, or career direction
- Progressive career momentum
- A career goal in line with the job being offered
- Willingness to work hard
- Overall construction and appearance of the résumé, although this criterion may not apply to résumés submitted via an online form

In the second pass, consider the more subtle differences among qualified candidates. Then develop a list of the strongest candidates.

## Résumé warning signs

When reviewing résumés, be on the alert for warning signs that can indicate areas of weakness such as:

- Lengthy description of education (possibly not much job experience)
- Obvious gaps in background
- Too much personal information (possibly not much job experience)
- Descriptions of jobs and positions only, with no descriptions of results or accomplishments
- Typos and poor reproduction quality

## Activity: Spot a suspect résumé

By learning to spot warning signs in résumés, you can boost your chances of hiring right.

You're reviewing a résumé from someone interested in a job writing marketing copy. Above is a section of the résumé. Do you see any warning signs? If so, what are they?

- ☐ This résumé contains no descriptions of results or accomplishments.

**Not the best choice.** This résumé does offer information on the candidate's results and accomplishments; for example, the brand-building strategies he developed.

- ☐ This résumé contains typographical errors.

**Correct choice.** Typographical errors in a résumé can indicate areas of weakness in the candidate and thus constitute a warning sign.

- ☐ This résumé contains no warning signs.

**Not the best choice.** The résumé does contain some warning signs (look closely!) that can indicate areas of weakness in the candidate.

## Interview process overview



A hiring interview has one primary purpose—to provide an opportunity for both interviewer and job candidate to obtain the information they need to make the best possible decision. Since the time spent with any particular job candidate is limited, a well-organized approach will help make the most of that time, yielding more and better information.

When selecting someone for an important position, you may go through all of the following stages. You'll probably go through at least two to three of them for every job opening.

1. **Create an interview team.** Before you begin interviewing candidates, you may want to set up an interview team to help with the process. The interview team should comprise a select few people who are familiar with the job function or who will be interacting with person hired. The team may include a representative from HR, other managers, peers, and direct reports. Each team member brings different experience and perspective to the process, resulting in a broader view that is more likely to lead to a successful hiring decision.
2. **Telephone-screening interview.** You or someone from a recruiting agency, the interview team, HR, or your department may conduct a telephone-screening interview. Its purpose is to confirm that the candidate meets the stated job qualifications. It is also a good opportunity to get some initial impressions of the candidate: Does he or she call you back at the specified time? Communicate well?

3. **Initial in-person interview.** Try to narrow the field to four to seven candidates before holding an initial interview. This interview will probably last 30 to 60 minutes. For less demanding positions, you may find out everything you need to know about the candidate in this interview. In other cases, you will need to see the person again.
4. **Second interview.** Be very selective about which candidates are asked back for a second interview. At this point, if you don't have an interview team, you might ask others with a stake in the process to meet the candidate. These may include direct reports, potential peers, or other managers. This interview often brings out more of the "real" person.
5. **Final interview.** Schedule a final interview with each candidate during which time you and, if appropriate, your manager sell the job and organization. You may also want the candidates to meet with someone from HR to learn briefly about company policies and benefits.
6. **Make a decision and offer.** The last step of the hiring process is making the decision and extending a job offer. Always aim for the individual who can contribute the most to your organization's success.

## Structured versus unstructured interviews

The approach you use when interviewing may vary with the type of position you are trying to fill and your comfort level with the interview process. Two basic approaches are structured and unstructured interviews.

In a **structured interview**, you ask all of the candidates the same questions so you can compare answers. The purpose of structured interviews is to be fair and objective, but this approach may not elicit as much information from candidates as unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are more appropriate for positions that don't require much judgment or creative thinking.

**Unstructured interviews** are individual conversations that do not necessarily cover all the same questions with every candidate. You may learn more about each candidate, but it will be difficult to compare their responses. This type of interview is beneficial when you are filling a position that involves a fair amount of decision making, problem solving, and interaction with others. It opens the door to productive areas of inquiry that neither you nor your colleagues may have anticipated.

In most cases, it's probably a good idea to steer a middle path between these two interview approaches. Be flexible in your line of inquiry, but be sure that all interviewees respond to a core set of questions. By preparing those core questions in advance, you can assure yourself and the decision-making team that all key points are covered, and that all candidates respond to them.

## Develop an interview guide

An interview guide helps you be consistent, focused, and fair in your interviews. It also helps you maintain control of the interview. You can develop one general interview guide per job opening and then create individualized copies that contain each candidate's information. During the interview, you can use the customized guide as a road map and place to take notes.

An interview guide contains:

- A summary of the job requirements as outlined in your job profile
- The candidate's relevant experience and accomplishments
- Questions to ask to determine if the candidate has the qualities you want; some questions should be general and asked of all candidates, while other questions should be customized for each

## candidate

## Example Interview Guide

If the résumé states:	Ask:
"I successfully managed development of a new line of consumer kitchenware."	"How was success measured: by revenues, time-to-market, what? Specifically, what was your role in the development effort?"
"I worked effectively with marketing and sales to increase annual unit sales by 25% over the past 12 months."	"What was the nature of your contribution? How were unit sales increased: by more effective selling or by slashing prices?"
"I initiated the redesign of key department processes."	"What processes? What do you mean by 'initiated'? Why did you decide to do this? Why was this initiative important?"

Before you distribute interview guides to the interview team, it's always prudent to have your human resource department and/or legal counsel review these guides to ensure that they do not include any questions that you may not legally ask.

## Key Idea: Be prepared for the interview

### Key Idea

You will be able to gather more of the information you need to make a good hiring decision if you take the time and trouble to prepare for interviews. In addition, you'll leave a better impression on the candidate if you are organized and efficient. This is important because the candidate is interviewing you, too. Here are the steps you should take to prepare for an interview:

- Read the candidate's résumé and cover letter



- Find out where the candidate is in the interviewing process, with whom they have previously interviewed, and what additional information he or she may have provided in previous interviews
- Become familiar with the job function
- Formulate questions or, if you are using one, review the questions in the interview guide
- Know what your organization has to offer candidates and what the candidate is looking for so that you can promote your organization and the job opportunity
- Be up to date on your organization's reputation
- Practice your interviewing skills by role-playing with a colleague

A successful interview won't happen without preparation. How can you make sure that you're ready?

## Three phases



There are three phases to the interview.

1. **Opening.** 10% of the allotted time. Your goal is to make the candidate feel comfortable and to set expectations about the structure of the interview.
2. **Body.** 80% of the allotted time. During this phase, you gather the information you will need to evaluate the candidate. You also "sell" your organization.
3. **Close.** 10% of the allotted time. This phase is when you answer any remaining questions the candidate may have, explain the next steps in the hiring process, and thank the candidate for coming.

## The opening

There are several things you can do to set the right tone at the beginning of the interview.

- **Greet the candidate.** To put the candidate at ease, be warm and friendly. Introduce yourself. Smile, make eye contact, and shake hands. Include the candidate's name in your greeting. If you are not sure how to pronounce it, ask. Be aware of cultural nuances.
- **Select a quiet, private meeting space that will not be conducive to interruptions.** Activate your voice mail or redirect your phone calls; do not take any calls during the interview.
- **Make sure the candidate is physically comfortable.** In the interview space, show the candidate where to put his or her coat and where to sit. Offer the candidate a beverage.
- **Introduce yourself.** Explain your role in the organization and how it relates to the open position.
- **Explain the structure of the interview.** For example, you might say:
  - "I'm going to ask you about your experience."

- "I'm interested in finding out about you as an individual."
- "We're interested in finding out whether there is a good fit between your interests and abilities and our organizational needs."
- "I will tell you about our organization."
- "I'll be glad to take your questions at the end of the interview."
- **Establish rapport with the candidate.** There are several approaches you can use:
  - Acknowledge some of the difficulties or awkwardness related to being interviewed, such as meeting a lot of new people or being tired at the end of the day.
  - If you are the first to interview the candidate, ask how his or her commute was or how the directions to the building were.
  - Compliment the candidate on some aspect of the experience displayed in his or her résumé.
  - Acknowledge that you have something in common, such as attending the same college or sharing an outside interest.

## Key Idea: The body

### Key Idea

During the body of the interview, you are assessing the candidate's qualifications, skills, knowledge, and experience and comparing them to the job description you created. Pursue a direct line of questions based on the résumé. Identify similarities and patterns of behavior consistent with your ideal profile. If appropriate, ask for samples of work, transcripts, and references to review after the interview.

It can sometimes be difficult to get the candidate to be specific about accomplishments listed on his or her résumé. Ask directly for details, and probe for tangible measures of success.

Ask the questions you identified in preparing the interview guide.

For example, if the résumé states: "I played the leading role in the best-rated show," ask "How was the success of your performance measured? Specifically, what was your role in achieving the show's ratings?"

You are also assessing the candidate's personal qualities, such as leadership, problem-solving, communication, teamwork skills, and motivation. Ask behavioral and scenario-based questions about past experiences and "what if" situations. Look for an understanding of the job, enthusiasm, a willingness to learn, and potential fit in the organization.

The body of the interview is when you will find out the most information about the candidate. How can you make sure that this part goes as well as the rest?

## The close

During the close, wrap up the interview and explain the remainder of the hiring process. The table below outlines what the close entails.

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Do the following:	Example:
Ask if the candidate has anything else to add.	"Is there anything else you wanted to tell me about that I did not give you a chance to discuss?"
Ask if the candidate has questions or if there is anything that hasn't been covered or that is unclear.	"I see our time is almost up. Before we close, is there a question or two I might be able to answer for you?"
Explain how and when the candidate will hear about follow-up interviews or a decision.	"We will review all of the information and be in touch with you by (date)."
Provide the candidate with your business card. Invite the candidate to call you with further questions.	"Here is my business card. Please feel free to contact me if you have any other questions."
Promote your organization. Remember to target the features of your organization that would appeal to the candidate.	"I hope you'll strongly consider our organization. As the leader in the field, we have many fascinating projects ongoing and many more in our future."
Thank the applicant. Shake hands and make eye contact. Walk the candidate to the door or to his or her next destination.	"Thank you for your time and for helping us learn more about your experience. I believe you are meeting with Stan next. Let me walk you to his office."

Some candidates may ask questions about salary or benefits at this stage. In some organizations, the human resources department addresses these questions. However, you may need to address them yourself. Be prepared. If you don't have the information, tell the candidate you will get him or her the information when you have it.

## Keep the interview focused



The goal of the interview is to learn as much as possible about the candidate. You therefore need to keep the conversation focused, encourage the candidate to talk, and take notes so that you remember important information about the individual.

The key to maintaining control is to ask most of the questions and do most of the listening. You should be listening 80% of the time.

- **Follow logical lines of inquiry and return to them if the candidate asks a question.**
- **Avoid having the candidate ask questions until the end of the interview.**
- **If the candidate gets off track in answering a question, gently steer him or her back to your topic.** Use phrases such as, "You were saying earlier..." or "tell me more about..."
- **Actively listen.** Focus on what the person is saying and withhold judgment.
- **Regularly summarize what you hear to:** confirm what has been said; make transitions between topics; and limit the comments of a wordy candidate. An example of such a summary would be, "Are you saying that there was a six-month period when you were supervising 20 people in two different departments? That must have been difficult. How did you stay organized and on top of what was happening?"

## Activity: Keep the interview on track

You'll need to keep your interview focused if you want to learn everything you can about the candidate. What are some ways to keep the discussion on track?

Andy was recently tasked with staffing a new training initiative at his company. He's brought in Jessica for an interview. Listen to this portion of the interview and help Andy keep the discussion on track.

**Andy:** I'm glad you could be here today! So you just spoke with Jim...great. During this interview, I'll be asking you some questions and taking notes. Let's see...One of the things we look for in

new hires is a track record of achievement in past jobs. Have you ever tackled any challenging situations in your previous positions?

**Jessica:** Many times, yes.

**Andy:** Okay...uhh...good to know.

What should Andy do at this point to conduct the interview more effectively?

- ☐ Ask "How did you meet a particularly tough challenge in your last job?"

**Correct choice.** This manager just asked a closed question (one that required only a "yes" or "no" response). Closed questions don't encourage job candidates to provide extensive information in their responses or to expand on their previous job experiences. By asking an open-ended question, the manager can elicit a more detailed response from the candidate and get the interview back on track.

- ☐ Use more smiling and pauses to help put the candidate at ease

**Not the best choice.** Actually, the manager has already done a good job of putting the candidate at ease through nodding, smiling, and pausing.

- ☐ Ask about the candidate's track record: "Were you successful in meeting those challenges?"

**Not the best choice.** This is another example of a closed question (one that requires only a "yes" or "no" response). Closed questions don't encourage job candidates to provide extensive information in their responses or to expand on their previous job experiences.

Review the next portion of the interview and help Andy keep the discussion on track.

**Andy:** You note on your résumé that during your time at the ArchiTech Corporation, you developed a training curriculum for new recruits. Tell me about one of the challenges involved, and how you were able to meet it.

**Jessica:** Wow...where to begin. One of the things I struggled with during that project was how to develop a training curriculum we could use in our offices around the world. We wanted our new hires to come out of training with the same skill sets. But they all had different cultural and educational backgrounds. For instance, some of them had PhDs and were fluent in several languages, while others were straight out of high school. Which actually reminds me of something that happened while I was finishing my degree at...

What should Andy do at this point to conduct the interview more effectively?

- ☐ Say something like, "You were telling me earlier. . ." or "Say more about. . ."

**Correct choice.** This candidate has started to digress. By using these phrases, the manager could get the candidate back to the original question.

- ☐ Take more detailed notes

**Not the best choice.** The interviewer has been taking plenty of notes.

- ☐ Control his negative reaction to what the candidate said

**Not the best choice.** While controlling negative reactions to the candidate is always good, in this situation the manager will need to do even more to get this digressing candidate back to the original question.

Review the next portion of the interview and help Andy keep the discussion on track.

**Andy:** You were telling me about this problem of designing the training curriculum. What else can you tell me about how you solved the problem?

**Jessica:** I designed a computer course for new hires to work better in teams around the world.

What should Andy say at this point to conduct the interview most effectively?

- ☐ "So, that was a pretty difficult task?"

**Not the best choice.** This is both a closed and a leading question. The candidate can only answer "yes" or "no," and the manager has made an assumption about how the candidate will respond. The question thus leaves little room for the degree of elaboration the manager will need to understand how the candidate solved the problem at hand.

- ☐ "How did you go about creating this course?"

**Correct choice.** By using the candidate's response in an open follow-up question, the manager can encourage the person to discuss the topic in further depth.

- ☐ "That's a pretty brief response. Do you need to take a break before we continue?"

**Not the best choice.** Though in some cases a job candidate may need to take a break during an interview, this manager should ask a question that prompts the candidate to say more about how the problem in question was solved.

## Encourage the candidate to talk

The more you can encourage the candidate to talk, the more accurate your picture of him or her will be. You can use the following techniques:

- **Encourage the candidate to talk** by smiling, nodding, and leaving pauses before you jump in with a comment or another question.
- **Ask follow-up questions** that lead to more elaboration and specific examples of key information about the candidate.
- **Use the candidate's response** in your follow-up questions.
- **Use open-ended questions** that incorporate terms such as "how," "why," "can you describe," and "tell me about."

Try to monitor your own reactions. Avoid reacting negatively to what the interviewee has to say—otherwise he or she will not respond as candidly to future questions. Know your own biases and try to control their influence. Your first impression may change as the interview progresses. Some people

make a great impression in the first few minutes, yet become less impressive as they talk more. Other people are nervous or slow to warm up, and their strengths take longer to emerge.

## Take notes

Notes help you recall significant facts about the candidate. Do take notes, but be unobtrusive about it. Tell the candidate up front that you will be taking notes. Remember that your notes will become part of the employee file. Avoid writing anything down that could be construed as inconsistent with equal opportunity employment laws.

Take time between interviews to write down any additional notes or observations while they are still fresh in your mind.

## What is an effective question?

The interview is all about asking effective questions that get your candidate to talk freely about him or herself. An effective question:

- Has a purpose
- Is tied to your decision-making criteria
- Opens communication
- Is job-related
- Is not "leading"
- Is nonthreatening

Effective questions reflect favorably on you and demonstrate your interest. The candidate will sense that you took time to develop thoughtful questions.

## Different types of questions

You are more likely to elicit the information you need to effectively evaluate the candidate if you vary the types of questions you use during the interview. The table below lists the different types of questions you might ask.

Question type:	Example:
<b>Open-ended questions</b> begin with "what," "how," "why," "when," or "where." They invite long answers that encourage the candidate to do most of the talking.	"When were you a member of a team? Can you describe what it was like?"



<p><b>Closed questions</b> begin with "did," "would," "do," and "are." These questions can be answered "yes" or "no." They should be used sparingly because they do not encourage the candidate to talk.</p>	<p>"Do you have any experience working on a team?"</p>
<p><b>Self-appraisal questions</b> require the candidate to give some thought to his or her interpersonal skills and abilities. They allow the candidate, rather than you, to interpret the facts.</p>	<p>"Why do you think you were selected to lead the task force?"</p>
<p><b>Accomplishment questions</b> provide evidence of the candidate's demonstrated behavioral qualities. They help you learn why and how something was accomplished, and they reveal a candidate's level of involvement in the accomplishment.</p>	<p>"Tell me about a contribution you have made to a team effort."</p>
<p><b>Broad-brush questions</b> make the candidate think about a big topic, choose an answer, and organize his or her thoughts.</p>	<p>"Tell me about your experience as a project manager with the fiber optics group."</p>
<p><b>Comparison questions</b> reveal a candidate's analytical and reasoning abilities.</p>	<p>"How would you compare working with the fiber optics group to working with the polymer group?"</p>

**Leading questions** direct the candidate to answer what you want. They should be avoided.

"Would you say you have the motivation required for this job?"

## Leadership Insight: Uncovering passion

If you ask most managers what they focus on when hiring, they are likely to say two things: talent and experience, skill and experience. What can this person do? Where have they done it? Have they been effective?

I would like to suggest that there is a third element that should find its way into more hiring interviews, and that element is interest — passion. What does this person want to do? When is this person most alive and most likely to give everything they have to the job in front of them?

When someone is doing the work in a functional role that's allowing their deeply embedded life interests to be expressed, they are far more likely to be productive and loyal.

How do you do this? Some simple questions can be quite helpful, questions such as, "When have you been most alive at work? Tell me about that. What were you doing? What was the environment like? Why were you most alive?"

And the opposite: "When did you feel least alive at work? When did you feel like you were not deeply engaged, and why was that? When you think about our organization and everything I've told you about our organization, what roles, what positions, what settings do you think would bring from you that which is most excited, most interested, and most engaged?"

If you add interest to talent and experience, you're much more likely to come out of the hiring interview with a fuller picture of who this person is and where they will become most alive in your organization.

To better identify a potential employee, ask about their interests and passions during the interview.

### Timothy Butler

**Senior Fellow and Director of Career Development Programs, Harvard Business School**

Timothy Butler is a Senior Fellow and Director of Career Development Programs at Harvard Business School. His research interests focus on career decision making and the relationship between personality structure and work satisfaction.

His work has been published in periodicals such as Fortune, Fast Company, and the Harvard Business Review.

Tim's research has led to the development of three psychometric instruments, the Business Career Interest Inventory, the Management

and Professional Rewards Profile, and the Management and Professional Abilities Profile.

Tim has taught executive education programs and lectured at business schools throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. He has acted as a consultant to senior managers from organizations ranging from small technology start-ups to Fortune 500 corporations.

His published titles include "Discovering Your Career in Business," "The Twelve Bad Habits That Hold Good People Back," and "Getting Unstuck: How Dead Ends Become New Paths." Learn more about his work at: [www.careerleader.com](http://www.careerleader.com).

## Activity: Ask the right interview questions

By asking the right questions during an interview, you increase the odds of accurately evaluating the candidate.

Amanda is interviewing Curtis for an entry-level position in her department. Curtis has just described his role at his previous employer as the leader of an employee-development committee. Amanda would like to learn more about his interpersonal skills. Which question should Amanda ask?

- ☐ "In your view, what were the reasons you were selected to lead the development committee?"

**Correct choice.** Self-appraisal questions such as this one are a good way to get the candidate to think about his or her interpersonal abilities. These kinds of questions allow the candidate, rather than you, to interpret the facts.

- ☐ "So, were you selected to lead the development committee because you had exhibited previous leadership skills?"

**Not the best choice.** This sort of "leading question" points Curtis in the direction of the answer rather than letting him interpret the facts and think about his own interpersonal abilities.

Tony is interviewing Carla for a position on his team. The job that Carla is interviewing for will require specific skills, including the ability to work well in a team and to meet deadlines. Tony wants to assess Carla's skills in these areas. Which question should he ask her?

- ☐ "Are you generally able to complete projects and other tasks on schedule?"

**Not the best choice.** This is a closed question. It can be answered only with a "yes" or a "no"; thus, it will not likely encourage Carla to share extensive information about her accomplishments and skills.

- ☐ "Why don't you tell me about a time when you worked productively with a team?"

**Correct choice.** Accomplishment questions such as this one can help the candidate provide evidence of his or her demonstrated behavioral qualities and shed light on why

and how the person accomplished something.

Maxine is interviewing Rob for a position in her unit. The job will require strong analytical and reasoning capabilities. What question might Maxine ask to assess these qualities in Rob?

- ☐ "In what ways do you see yourself as having strong analytical skills?"

**Not the best choice.** This is a self-appraisal question, which is best used to encourage the candidate to think about his or her interpersonal skills. To assess Rob's analytical and reasoning abilities, Maxine needs to ask a different kind of question.

- ☐ "How would you compare managing a project to managing an individual?"

**Correct choice.** Comparison questions such as this can encourage a candidate to provide responses that shed light on his or her analytical and reasoning abilities.

## Appropriate topics

In most cases, you'll want to ask about the candidate's most recent job, work experience, skills, working style, career aspirations, and education. The table below provides some sample questions for each topic.

Topic area:	Example:
Introduction	<p>"How did you hear about the job opening?"</p> <p>"What attracted you to this organization?"</p>
Most Recent Job	<p>"Describe a typical day in your current/most recent position."</p> <p>"What do you find most satisfying/frustrating about the job?"</p> <p>"What is the most challenging aspect of your position?"</p> <p>"What have you learned most from the job?" How has that contributed to your growth?"</p>

Work Experience	<p>"How has your work experience prepared you for this job?"</p> <p>"Describe one or two of your greatest accomplishments and biggest disappointments."</p> <p>"What has been the most significant challenge you have managed? How did you manage it?"</p>
Skills	<p>"What is your greatest strength that would benefit our organization?"</p> <p>"Describe a time when you worked to meet a customer's needs."</p> <p>"Tell me about a time you when you had to evaluate a situation to resolve a problem. What was the situation and what actions did you take?"</p>
Style	<p>"How have you preferred to be supervised in your previous jobs?"</p> <p>"What type of organization do you prefer to work for?"</p> <p>"What kinds of people do you like to work with?"</p>
Career Aspirations	<p>"How does this job fit into your overall career plans?"</p> <p>"Where do you see yourself three years from now?"</p> <p>"In what areas would you like to receive additional training in if you got this job?"</p>
Education	

"What courses have prepared you for this position?"

"What got you interested in this field and your course of study?"

Also, depending on the requirements of the position, you might ask questions that help you learn more about characteristics such as adaptability, team effectiveness, self-control, or professional confidence.

## Inappropriate topics



You are not allowed to ask certain questions in order to protect individual rights. Topics that are not legal to discuss in an interview include:

- Age/date of birth
- Religion
- Race
- Citizenship
- Physical attributes
- Sexual orientation
- National origin
- Marital status
- Children
- Day care arrangements
- Arrests
- Place of residence; own or rent
- Previous worker's compensation claims
- Disabilities/physical ailments
- Specific promise of salary expectations

## How to reframe questions

U.S., federal, state, and local laws and regulations are clear about what questions are illegal. If you are not familiar with these laws and regulations, consult your human resources specialist or legal counsel.

### Examples of prohibited questions and legal ways to ask them

Topic Area:	Illegal to ask:	Legal to ask:
Citizenship/Nationality	"Are you a citizen of the United States?"	"If hired, can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the United States?"
Marital Status/Children/Day Care Arrangements	"Do you have children that you need to bring to day care?"	"This position requires travel and work on weekends. Would you be able to meet these requirements?"
Religion	"What is your religion?"	"This job requires that you work weekends. Would you be able to meet this requirement?"
Disabilities/Physical Ailments	"Do you have any health-related issues that would prohibit you from doing this job?"	"This job requires that you lift 50 pounds. Are you able to meet this requirement?"



Age/Date of Birth	"How old are you?"	"If hired, can you show proof that you are at least 18 years of age?"
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## Key Idea: Decision-making matrix

### Key Idea

A decision-making matrix can be a helpful tool for comparing the candidates to one another. To create a decision-making matrix, list your candidates along one side of a grid and list your job requirements across the top. Decide on a scoring system that you will use to rank each candidate's fit with each of the job requirements. Then, fill in the matrix using the evaluation notes you have made on the interview guides.

Certain data should be used to create your evaluation:

- Personal characteristics
- Education/training
- Essential performance factors
- Compatibility with organizational culture and management style
- Compatibility with the organization's reward system
- Ability to grow with and within the organization
- Elimination factors
- Essential technical experience
- Overall assessment

A decision-making matrix is an excellent tool to help you choose the best candidate for the job

## Common mistakes

Even though you make take a structured, methodical approach to evaluating your candidates, the evaluation process is still, in the end, subjective. Being aware of common mistakes can help you remain as neutral as possible. Try to avoid:

- Being overly impressed with maturity or experience, or overly dismayed by youth and immaturity
- Mistaking a quiet, reserved, or calm demeanor for lack of motivation
- Mistaking the person's ability to play "the interview game," or his or her ability to talk easily, for intelligence or competence
- Allowing personal biases to influence your assessment; you might be tempted to judge the candidate harshly or discredit the opinions of your team members because the candidate reminds you of someone you dislike
- Looking for a friend or for a reflection of yourself in the candidate
- Assuming that graduates of certain institutions or former employees of certain organizations are automatically better qualified

- Giving too much weight to familiarity with the jargon of your business
- Focusing only on one or two key strengths and overlooking the absence of other key characteristics
- Failing to value motivation to get ahead
- Ignoring feedback from team members and looking at the candidate from your perspective only
- Weighing the impact this person will have on your position, such as improvements to processes that may impact your job

## Check references

Reference checks verify claims made by the candidate during the interview process and fill in information gaps. They can also provide valuable outside perspectives on the candidate and his potential fit with the position.

Check references near the end of the process when you are close to making a personal decision. If you have not already discussed this with the candidates, be sure to obtain permission to avoid affecting someone's current employment.

Use the telephone or e-mail to check references. Don't check references via letter; you probably won't get much information. When checking references:

- Take a little time to build rapport with the reference
- Briefly describe the job that the candidate is applying for
- Beware of the legal ramifications of asking and answering inappropriate questions
- Ask about the candidate's style, character, strengths, and weaknesses
- Ask tough questions and follow up with detailed probes

### Sample Questions to Check References

Instead of asking:	Ask:
Did Jack do a good job managing his department?	"What was Jack best at?"  "What did his subordinates like best about him?"  "What did they like least?"  "Are there any jobs that would be inappropriate for Jack?"  "What kind of organizational environment would suit

	Jack best?"
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## The final decision



Résumés, interviews, and reference checks all inform the decision-making process. At some point, you must ask yourself, "Do we have sufficient information to make a decision?"

If the answer is "yes," you are ready to make the hiring decision. Rank your top three candidates, make the offer to the top-ranked candidate, and prepare to be rejected by your first choice. You may have to make more than one job offer.

If the answer is "no, we have insufficient information," then ask yourself these questions:

- "What additional information do we need to make a decision?"
- "What uncertainties can we reasonably expect to reduce?"
- "Do the candidate's strengths outweigh his or her weaknesses?"
- "What can be taught on the job or developed with formal training?"

Handle the remaining uncertainties to the extent that time and cost constraints permit. You may call some candidates back for another interview, or you may get additional team members involved in the process. Then, move to a decision.

## The job offer

Be sure you understand your organization's policy on who makes the job offer. In some organizations, the immediate supervisor or manager makes the offer. In others, the human resources department makes the offer.

Job offers are usually made in person or by telephone. Be sure to:

- Make the offer with enthusiasm.
- Make the offer personal by referring to something positive that you recall about the interview.
- Continue to gather information from the candidate regarding his or her concerns, the timing of the decision, and other organizations he or she may be considering.
- Provide a time frame for the offer so that the candidate knows how much time he or she has to respond.

## The offer letter

After extending a verbal offer, you should also send an offer letter. An offer letter is an official document, so be sure to seek advice from the appropriate channels before sending one. It is important to avoid implying that the offer is an employment contract. Include important facts in the letter, such as:

- Starting date
- Job title
- Expected responsibilities
- Compensation
- Benefits summary
- Time limit for accepting the offer

## Sample offer letter

January 1, 2008

Mr. John Smith  
<Home Address>

Dear John:

It is my pleasure to formally offer you the position of Producer at XYZ Corporation. You will report to Sarah Jones, Executive Producer. Your base salary will be \$1,500 semi-monthly, which is equivalent to \$36,000 annually. Your start date will be Monday, January 25. For a summary of your benefits, please see the attached folder of information.

Consistent with XYZ's policy, the first three months of employment are an orientation and review period during which either the staff member or the employer may terminate employment if, for any reason, the placement is unsuitable.

Please indicate your acceptance of this offer by signing the enclosed copy of this letter and returning it and the enclosed forms to me within one week of this date.

I look forward to meeting you and having you join the staff at XYZ. Please contact me if you have any questions about your new position.

Sincerely,

Vice President, Human Resources

AGREED AND ACCEPTED BY:

-----  
John Smith Date

cc: President and CEO

Sarah Jones

## Overview

This section provides interactive exercises so you can practice what you've learned. These exercises are self-checks only; your answers will not be used to evaluate your performance in the topic.

### Scenario

Assume the role of a manager in a fictional situation and explore different outcomes based on your choices (5-10 minutes).

### Check Your Knowledge

Assess your understanding of key points by completing a 10-question quiz (10 minutes).

## Scenario: Part 1

### Part 1

Jacob manages ProCo's engineering team. The company has enjoyed steady growth, and Jacob needs to expand his team to help support that success. He creates a job profile describing the available position and advertises the opening. From the résumés he receives, he selects the most promising candidates and schedules interviews.

His first interviewee is Toby, a woman who currently works for a leading and prestigious firm in ProCo's industry. She arrives on time and seems pleasant and intelligent, if a bit quiet. Jacob offers Toby a seat and chats casually for a few moments, to put her at ease. Jacob discovers that he and Toby grew up in adjacent towns. They talk about their hometowns briefly.

Which of the following would be good questions for Jacob to ask Toby?

- To continue to put Toby at ease, Jacob might ask, "What class were you in at Plainfield High?"

**Not the best choice.** In the United States, federal and state law prohibits asking questions that may reveal a candidate's age, such

as when he or she graduated from high school or college. Because Jacob and Toby grew up in adjacent towns, it may seem natural for him to ask her this question—but doing so is actually illegal.

- To learn more about Toby's work experience, Jacob could ask, "In what ways did you contribute to your team's effort in your last position?"

**Correct choice.** Such *accomplishment-related* questions will help get Toby talking. They also will provide evidence of her demonstrated behavioral qualities. Her answers will reveal why and how she accomplished something she considers important, as well as suggest her level of involvement in the accomplishment.

- To assess Toby's attitude toward teamwork, Jacob might ask, "Would you say you have a lot to offer this team?"

**Not the best choice.** A question like this is *leading*—it directs the candidate to answer with what Jacob wants to hear. Of course, Toby is going to say that she thinks she has a lot to offer Jacob's team. Leading questions won't help Jacob achieve his main objective in the interviewing process: to get as much information as possible from each candidate so that he can make an informed choice.

## Scenario: Part 2

### Part 2

As Jacob asks Toby more accomplishment-related questions, she begins talking about her previous work experiences. However, she answers slowly, with long gaps between comments. She seems a bit unsure of herself, and occasionally redirects the interview by asking Jacob several questions about the engineering team and ProCo.

Jacob wonders whether Toby is simply nervous or shy or if, perhaps, she has concerns about the job or ProCo in general. He finds the whole situation awkward but doesn't know how to get the interview back on track.

What should Jacob do to regain control of the interview?

- When Toby pauses after providing an answer, fill in the gap with a brief summary of what she just said to smooth the transitions between topics

**Not the best choice.**

This approach is more helpful with a candidate who is getting too wordy during an interview—which isn't the case with Toby.

Instead of summarizing, Jacob should use other tactics to get Toby talking, such as smiling and nodding before he jumps in with a comment or another question, or building on Toby's responses in his follow-up questions.

- Answer Toby's questions briefly. Then continue to move forward with his own questions, so he can get answers to each question on his prepared list

**Not the best choice.**

A better way to encourage Toby to talk more is to build on her responses while asking follow-up questions to those he has already asked. By moving forward too quickly with his remaining questions, Jacob will probably just keep getting more superficial responses from Toby, rather than the in-depth information he needs to evaluate her qualifications.

- Ask Toby to hold any questions she may have until the end of the interview, so he can ask most of the questions

**Correct choice.**

Jacob's goal during an interview is to ask most of the questions and do most of the listening. In fact, he should be listening 80% of the time. Though Toby's questions are important, he needs to turn the conversation back to the lines of inquiry he has prepared for the interview. One way to do that is to suggest deferring questions until the end of the interview, and to gently steer Toby back to the topic at hand.

## Scenario: Part 3

### Part 3

By regaining control of the interview with Toby, Jacob discovers that she has valuable experience and strong motivation to advance in her career.

Over the coming week, he interviews the other candidates. He narrows the list to two individuals: Toby and Lars, a seasoned engineer who came across as very comfortable and confident during his interview.

Jacob conducts second interviews with Toby and Lars. During these conversations, both candidates continue to impress him, though for different reasons. Now he faces the tough question: Which one should he offer the job to? He constructs a matrix in which he ranks each candidate's fit with each of the job requirements. But he knows that the final choice will still be subjective. In addition to using the matrix, he decides to consider other, less quantifiable characteristics of the candidates.



What other characteristics should Jacob consider in selecting a candidate?

- Toby's current position at a leading and prestigious firm within the industry

**Not the best choice.**

Just because a candidate works for a highly respected organization doesn't automatically mean that he or she is better qualified than other candidates. To remain as neutral as possible in weighing Toby and Lars' qualifications, Jacob should take care not to give too much weight to this fact.

- Lars' ability to converse comfortably and confidently during the interview

**Not the best choice.**

Too many managers make the mistake of assuming that a candidate's ability to "play the interview game" (that is, to talk easily) indicates intelligence or competence. Lars may indeed be smart and competent, but Jacob shouldn't give his conversational ease too much weight while evaluating the two candidates.

- Toby's strong motivation to move ahead in her career

**Correct choice.**

Many managers undervalue professional motivation while assessing candidates' qualifications. But motivation and drive can be crucial qualities in new hires. These traits influence a person's ability to focus, to devote energy to his or her work, and to master new skills—valuable characteristics in any employee.

## Scenario: Conclusion

### Conclusion

After carefully weighing both objective and subjective factors, Jacob decides to offer Toby the job. She accepts, and Jacob looks forward to welcoming her to ProCo and his team.

Hiring right isn't easy. But you can boost your chances of success by asking accomplishment-related legal questions during interviews, maintaining control of interviews, and avoiding several common pitfalls in evaluating candidates. Together, these three strategies help you identify the most promising candidate for the job.

## Activity: Check Your Knowledge: Question 1

When defining job requirements, you consider four areas. Three of these areas are primary responsibilities and tasks, background characteristics, and personal characteristics. What is the fourth area you should consider?

- [Organizational structure and culture](#)

**Correct choice.**

By considering organizational structure and culture in addition to responsibilities and background and personal characteristics, you can more easily determine the attributes a job candidate would need to fit in with the organization as a whole.

- [The amount of compensation available for the position](#)

**Not the best choice.**

Compensation is something you would include in your job description, not an area you would consider while defining job requirements. The correct answer is "Organizational structure and culture." By considering organizational structure and culture in addition to responsibilities, background, and personal characteristics, you can more easily determine the attributes a job candidate would need to fit in with the organization as a whole.

- [The hiring and reporting manager](#)

**Not the best choice.**

The hiring and reporting manager would eventually be listed in the job description, not considered while you are defining job requirements. The correct answer is "Organizational structure and culture." By considering organizational structure and culture in addition to responsibilities, background, and personal characteristics, you can more easily determine the attributes a job candidate would need to fit in with the organization as a whole.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 2

Once you understand a position's requirements, the next step is to create a job description. What is the purpose of a job description?

- [A job description enables you to see how your organization defines a particular job in comparison to how other organizations define the same or a similar position.](#)

**Not the best choice.**

A job description does not contain information about how the job compares with similar positions in other companies. Instead, it allows you to explain the job to potential candidates and to resources (such as recruiting firms) you may be using to help you identify candidates.

- [A job description provides you with a way to evaluate candidates and quickly eliminate those who are unqualified.](#)

**Not the best choice.**

A job description is not intended to help you evaluate candidates and quickly eliminate those who are unqualified. Instead, it allows you to explain the job to potential candidates and to resources (such as recruiting firms) you may be using to help you identify candidates.

- A job description allows you to explain the job to potential candidates and to resources you may be using to help you identify candidates.

**Correct choice.**

A job description allows you to provide a thorough and consistent explanation of the job requirements to both potential candidates and recruiting resources.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 3

What is the first step to take when you begin screening résumés?

- Eliminate the candidates who do not meet the basic education and experience requirements

**Correct choice.**

By eliminating candidates who don't meet basic education and experience requirements, you make the screening process manageable and ensure that the candidates you consider have the background characteristics required for the position.

- Eliminate the candidates who work outside the industry

**Not the best choice.**

Candidates who work outside the industry may have excellent transferable experience and skills, so you shouldn't eliminate them when you begin screening résumés. Instead, it's best to start by eliminating the candidates who do not meet the basic education and experience requirements. This method helps make the screening process manageable and ensures that the candidates you consider have the background characteristics required for the position.

- Determine whether you know any of the candidates

**Not the best choice.**

Knowing a candidate does not necessarily make him or her the best person for the job, so you shouldn't favor these individuals when you begin screening résumés. Instead, it's best to start by eliminating the candidates who do not meet the basic education and experience requirements. This method helps make the screening process manageable and ensures that the candidates you consider have the background characteristics required for the position.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 4

What is the advantage of having an interview team?

- The interview process is less time-consuming because several people will be sharing the task.

**Not the best choice.**

Having an interview team doesn't necessarily make the interview process less time-consuming. The advantage to having an interview team is that each team member brings different experiences and a different perspective to the process. This broader view of the candidate and the position is more likely to lead to a successful hiring decision.

- Each team member brings different experiences and perspectives to the process.

**Correct choice.**

The broader view of the candidate and position afforded by the team members' different perspectives is more likely to lead to a successful hiring decision.

- The hiring decision can be made more quickly because the team members can use majority rule to select the best candidate.

**Not the best choice.**

An interview team doesn't necessarily accelerate the hiring decision, nor will it necessarily use majority rule to select the best candidate. The advantage to having an interview team is that each team member brings different experiences and a different perspective to the process. This broader view of the candidate and the position is more likely to lead to a successful hiring decision.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 5

You've decided to conduct initial in-person interviews. How many candidates might you want to meet and how much time should you allot for each interview?

- Narrow the field to two to four candidates and keep initial interviews to 15 minutes.

**Not the best choice.**

This is too few candidates and too short a time to evaluate them. For initial in-person interviews, it is best to select four to seven candidates and allow up to an hour per candidate. For less demanding positions, you may find out everything you need to know about each candidate in this interview. Otherwise, you will need to see the person again.

- Narrow the field to four to seven candidates and schedule 30-60 minutes per interview.

**Correct choice.**

Do your best to limit the field to four to seven candidates and allow up to an hour per interview. For less demanding positions, you may find out everything you need to know about the candidate in this interview. Otherwise, you may need to see the candidate again.

- **Narrow the field to no more than a dozen candidates and schedule 30 minutes for each interview.**

**Not the best choice.**

This is too many candidates and possibly too short a time to evaluate them. For initial in-person interviews, it is best to limit the field to four to seven candidates and allow up to an hour per candidate. For less demanding positions, you may find out everything you need to know about the candidate in this interview. Otherwise, you will need to see the person again.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 6

Which type of interview is usually most effective?

- **A structured interview in which all candidates answer the same set of questions.**

**Not the best choice.**

Though structured interviews enable you to easily compare candidates, you should combine this structure with an unstructured approach. Unstructured interviews offer the advantage of helping you get to know each individual. To combine these two approaches, ask all candidates a core set of questions, but be flexible and inquire about unique, interesting information on their résumés so you can learn more about them.

- **An unstructured interview in which you have unique conversations with each candidate based on his or her individual skills and experience.**

**Not the best choice.**

Though unstructured interviews offer the advantage of helping you get to know each individual, you should combine this unstructured approach with a more structured approach. A structured interview, in which all candidates answer the same set of questions, enables you to easily compare candidates. To combine these two approaches, ask all candidates a core set of questions, but be flexible and inquire about unique, interesting information on their résumés so you can learn more about them.

- **An interview that combines elements of a structured and unstructured interview.**

**Correct choice.**

Structured interviews enable you to easily compare candidates. Unstructured interviews offer the advantage of enabling you to get to know each individual. It's best to combine these two approaches. Ask all candidates a core set of questions, but be flexible and inquire about unique, interesting information on their résumés so you can learn more about them.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 7

Which question is illegal to ask during a job interview?

- "Do you have any health-related issues that would prohibit you from doing this job?"

**Correct choice.**

This question is phrased in such a way that it violates the candidate's individual rights. It's critical that you frame such a question in terms of specific job requirements. Legal wording would be, "This job requires that you lift 50 pounds. Are you able to meet this requirement?" If you are not familiar with these laws and regulations, consult your human resources specialist or legal counsel prior to interviewing.

- "If hired, can you show proof that you are at least 18 years of age?"

**Not the best choice.**

This question is legal to ask during a job interview. The illegal question is: "Do you have any health-related issues that would prohibit you from doing this job?" This question is illegal because it's phrased in a way that violates the candidate's individual rights. It's critical that you frame such a question in terms of specific job requirements. Legal wording would be, "This job requires that you lift 50 pounds. Are you able to meet this requirement?" If you are not familiar with these laws and regulations, consult your human resources specialist or legal counsel prior to interviewing.

- "If hired, can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the United States?"

**Not the best choice.**

This question is legal to ask during a job interview. The illegal question is: "Do you have any health-related issues that would prohibit you from doing this job?" This question is illegal because it's phrased in a way that violates the candidate's individual rights. It's critical that you frame such a question in terms of specific job requirements. Legal wording would be, "This job requires that you lift 50 pounds. Are you able to meet this requirement?" If you are not familiar with these laws and regulations, consult your human resources specialist or legal counsel prior to interviewing.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 8

When evaluating candidates, which of the following is important to do?

- Finding a candidate who is likely to be compatible with your organizational culture and management style

**Correct choice.**

Compatibility with your organizational culture and management style is one important criterion to consider as you're evaluating candidates. Additional criteria include essential technical experience, ability to grow in the organization, and compatibility with the organization's reward system, among others. Mistakes to avoid include looking for candidates who are like you and assuming that candidates who have worked for certain organizations will be highly qualified for the job.

- Finding a candidate who is similar to you so you can be assured you will work well together

**Not the best choice.**

Looking for someone just like you is a common mistake made during the evaluation process. Instead, you want the new hire to be compatible with your organizational culture and management style. Additional criteria include essential technical experience, ability to grow in the organization, and compatibility with the organization's reward system, among others.

- Finding a candidate who has worked for a direct competitor of your organization

**Not the best choice.**

Assuming that former employees of certain organizations are automatically better qualified is a common mistake made during the evaluation process. Instead, you want the new hire to be compatible with your organizational culture and management style. Additional criteria include essential technical experience, ability to grow in the organization, and compatibility with the organization's reward system, among others.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 9

You are on the telephone with a candidate's reference. You hope to confirm your positive impressions, verify claims the candidate has made, and fill in any information gaps you may have. Which question is probably *not* going to give you useful information?

- "What are her strengths and weaknesses?"

**Not the best choice.**

Asking "What are her strengths and weaknesses?" actually *would* give you useful information. The question that would *not* be helpful is "Did she do a good job managing her department?" This question probably won't give you useful information because it requires a simple "yes" or "no" response. You want more detailed responses than that. References will likely give you more useful, detailed information when you ask open-ended questions about a candidate's style, character, strengths, and weaknesses. Ask tough questions and follow up with detailed probes.

- "What did her direct reports like best about her? What did they like least?"

**Not the best choice.**

Asking "What did her direct reports like best and least about her?" actually *would* give you useful information. The question that would *not* be helpful is "Did she do a good job managing her department?" This question probably won't give you useful information because it requires a simple "yes" or "no" response. You want more detailed responses than that. References will likely give you more useful, detailed information when you ask open-ended questions about a candidate's style, character, strengths, and weaknesses. Ask tough questions and follow up with detailed probes.

- "Did she do a good job managing her department?"

**Correct choice.**

This question probably won't give you useful information because it requires a simple "yes" or "no" response. You want more detailed responses than that. References will likely give you more useful, detailed information when you ask open-ended questions about a candidate's style, character, strengths, and weaknesses. Ask tough questions and follow up with detailed probes.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 10

What is the purpose of an offer letter?

- An offer letter is used to make the initial job offer to the selected candidate.

**Not the best choice.**

You would most likely make the initial job offer by phone, not through a letter. An offer letter is used as a follow-up measure after the initial offer is made by phone. It outlines the job responsibilities and terms of the offer.

- An offer letter is sent to the candidate after the initial offer is made by phone to summarize the terms of the offer.

**Correct choice.**

An offer letter is used as a follow-up measure after the initial offer is made by phone. It outlines the job responsibilities and terms of the offer, but is not an employment contract.

- An offer letter is an employment contract that outlines the terms of the offer and which the candidate needs to sign and return to you to accept the position.

**Not the best choice.**

An offer letter is not an employment contract; the contract is a separate document. An offer letter is used as a follow-up measure after the initial offer is made by phone. It outlines the job responsibilities and terms of the offer.

## Check Your Knowledge: Results

# Your score:

## Steps for recruiting candidates

### 1. Define job requirements.

- Primary responsibilities and tasks involved in this job
- Background characteristics needed to perform the job (education and experience)
- Personal characteristics required (analytical and creative abilities, decision-making style, interpersonal skills, motivation)



- Key features of your organization's culture (team-orientation, degree of conformity)

A clear definition of the job requirements will help you determine what will make for a good fit between an individual's skills and personal attributes and the needs of the job and the organization. To define the job requirements, you need to determine the:

## 2. Develop a job description.

- Job title, business unit, organization
- Summary of the job tasks, responsibilities, and objectives
- Hiring manager, reporting manager
- Compensation, hours, location
- Background characteristics required
- Personal characteristics required

A job description allows you to explain the job both to potential candidates and to resources you may be using to help you identify candidates. Keep in mind that this is an opportunity to redesign a job, not simply to fill the current position. Your job description should include the following:

## 3. Get the word out.

- Recruiting agencies
- Newspaper ads
- Referrals from colleagues
- Trade publications
- Professional associations
- Networking
- Colleges and universities
- The Internet (recruitment Web sites and your company's Web site)
- Job fairs
- Also, make sure that your communications about the job reflect your company's interest in diversity.

You will want to get the word out through as many relevant channels as possible to maximize the number of qualified applicants in your candidate pool. Typical channels include:

## 4. Screen résumés.

- Signs of achievement and results, for example, profit orientation, stability, or career direction
- Progressive career momentum
- A career goal in line with the job being offered
- Willingness to work hard
- Overall construction and appearance of the résumé, although this criterion may not apply to résumés submitted via an online form
- Compare the résumé to the technical (education and experience) skills and personal characteristics required
- Consider the differences among qualified candidates and weigh the strengths and weaknesses of each

When you have a large number of résumés to review, use a two-step process to make your task more manageable.

In the *first pass*, eliminate the résumés for those candidates who do not meet the basic requirements of the job. Specific aspects of the résumés to examine could include:

In the *second pass*, consider the more subtle differences among qualified candidates.

Then develop a list of the strongest candidates.

Be on the alert for *red flags* that can signal weakness in a résumé.

## Steps for asking interview questions

### 1. Find out how the candidate learned about your organization and the position.

- "What attracted you to this company?" "This position?"
- "How did you hear about the job opening?"

### 2. Learn about a candidate's most recent job.

- "How did you get your present job?"
- "What are your areas of responsibility?"
- "Describe a typical day in your current/most recent position."
- "What do you find most satisfying about the job?" "Why?"
- "What do you find most frustrating about the job?" "Why?" "How do you deal with these frustrations?"
- "What is the most challenging aspect of your position?" "Why?"
- "What have you learned most from the job?" "How has that contributed to your growth?"
- "If we were to ask your present employer about your abilities, what would she or he say?"
- "How would your direct reports describe you?" "Your peers?"
- "What would your current or most recent manager say your greatest contribution has been?"

### 3. Gather information about a candidate's actual work experience.

- "How has your work experience prepared you for this job?"
- "Describe for me one or two of your greatest accomplishments and biggest disappointments."
- "What has been the most significant challenge you have managed?" "How did you manage it?"
- "What is the most creative achievement you have experienced at work?"
- "What can you say about yourself that has contributed to your success?"
- "Can you tell me about a new initiative or procedure you have worked on that had a positive impact?"
- "Give me two examples of good decisions and two examples of poor decisions you have made in your work life."
- "Describe a time when your job performance fell short of expectations."
- "What qualities can you bring to this position?"
- "Give me an example of your ability to supervise others."

### 4. Assess a candidate's skills.

- "Do you consider yourself a self-starter?" "If so, explain why." "Give examples."
- "What is your greatest strength that would benefit our organization?"
- "How have you positively influenced others to get a job done?"
- "Describe a decision that you made when you did not have all the pertinent information."
- "Tell me about a time you made a decision quickly."
- "How have you supported a new policy or procedure with which you have disagreed?"
- "In what ways do you motivate your direct reports?" "Your peers?"
- "Describe a situation when you had to seek out information, analyze it, and make a decision."
- "Describe a recent decision that you made that had high risks associated with it. How did you make this decision?"

**5. Assess a candidate's style/fit with the organization.**

- "Of all the jobs you have had, which did you like the most?" "Why?"
- "How have you preferred to be supervised in your previous jobs?"
- "What role have your past supervisors played in supporting you in your job?" "Your career?"
- "What type of organization do you prefer to work for?"
- "Do you prefer working in groups or alone?"
- "Describe a work group experience that you found rewarding."
- "What qualities do you value in your supervisor?"
- "In what types of environments do you feel most effective?"
- "How much direction and feedback do you need to be successful?"
- "What is most exciting to you about change?" "What is most frustrating about it?"
- "How have you dealt with organizational changes?"
- "How would you describe yourself as a supervisor?"
- "How would your supervisor describe you?"
- "What was the most difficult management decision you had to make?"
- "What kinds of people do you like to work with?"
- "What type of person do you find it most difficult to work with?" "Why?"
- "What things frustrate you the most at work?" "How do you cope with them?"

**6. Get a sense of a candidate's career aspirations and goals.**

- "What are some of the things you would like to avoid in your next job?" "Why?"
- "Why are you leaving your present job?"
- "How does this job fit into your overall career plans?"
- "Where do you see yourself three years from now?"
- "How have your career aspirations changed over the years?" "Why?"
- "What would you most like to accomplish if you got this job?"

**7. Learn about a candidate's education.**

- "What special aspects of your education or training have prepared you for this job?"
- "How have these areas prepared you for this job?"
- "What areas would you most need/like additional training in if you got this job?"
- "What aspects of your education or training will be useful for this job?"
- "What are your educational goals?"

**8. As appropriate for the job, ask about a candidate's experience with customer service and explore the degree to which he or she works to satisfy the customer.**

- "Describe a time when you dealt with a particularly stressful situation or with a hostile colleague or customer?"
- "What was the situation?"
- "What actions did you take?"
- "What did you say?"
- "What was the response or reaction?"

**9. Explore a candidate's degree of self-control.**

- "Describe a time when you dealt with a particularly stressful situation or with a hostile colleague or customer?"
- "What was the situation?"
- "What actions did you take?"
- "What did you say?"
- "What was the response or reaction?"

**10. Explore a candidate's ability for critical thinking, or the degree to which he or she can solve a problem.**

- "Tell me about a time when you had to evaluate a situation in order to resolve a problem."
- "What was the situation?"

- "What actions did you take?"
  - "What was the outcome?"
  - "How did you know you were successful?"
11. **Determine a candidate's degree of results orientation or the degree to which he or she consciously improves performance.**
- "Describe a time when you took the initiative to improve how you worked or how something operated (a process, system, team)."
  - "What led to the situation?"
  - "What actions did you take?"
  - "What was the outcome?"
  - "How did you know your solution was an improvement?"
12. **As appropriate for the job, explore a candidate's team effectiveness and level of cooperation.**
- "Describe a time when you assisted others or "team members" to accomplish a task or goal?"
  - "Describe a time when a person on the team did not carry his/her own weight."
  - "What was the task or goal?"
  - "What role did you play?"
  - "How did you assist the others?"
  - "What was the final result?"
13. **Explore a candidate's adaptability.**
- "Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to a new work environment or situation, or when a situation changed while you were in the midst of it"
  - "What was the situation?"
  - "How did you confront the changes you faced?"
  - "What actions did you take?"
  - "What was the outcome?"
14. **Get a sense of a candidate's professional confidence and the degree of belief in his or her ability to accomplish goals and solve problems.**
- "Tell me about a time when you had to remain poised in a challenging or unusual situation?"
  - "What did you do to assess the situation?"
  - "What were some of the issues involved?"
  - "What steps did you take?"
  - "What was the outcome?"

## Steps for making the hire

### 1. Evaluate the candidates.

- Use an interview guide to record your thoughts on each candidate.
- Score each individual on the decision-making matrix.
- Reflect on the top-scoring candidates. Are you comfortable with the prioritization the scores indicate? Note any remaining concerns or questions you have, and explore them when you check references.
- Be sure to remain as objective as you can in your assessments.

### 2. Check references.

Use the telephone or e-mail to check references. Don't check references via letter; you probably won't get much information.

- Take a little time to build rapport with the reference.
- Briefly describe the job that the candidate is applying for.

- Ask about the candidate's style, character, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Ask tough questions and follow up with detailed probes.
- Beware of the legal ramifications of asking and answering inappropriate questions.

### 3. Extend an offer.

Be sure you understand your organization's policy on who makes the job offer. In some organizations, the immediate supervisor or manager makes the offer. In others, the human resources department makes the offer.

Job offers are usually made in person or by telephone.

- Make the offer with enthusiasm.
- Make the offer personal. Refer to something positive that you recall about the interview.
- Continue to gather information from the candidate regarding his or her concerns, timing of the decision, and other organizations he or she may be considering.

Follow up on the verbal offer by sending an offer letter, which should summarize all of the important facts about the offer. The letter is an official document—be sure to craft it carefully, and seek expert advice if necessary.

Be prepared to make the offer to the next ranked candidate if your first choice declines.

## Tips for finding the right person

- Consider current employees.
- Hire from outside your organization to bring in new outlooks, skills, and experiences.
- Know what kind of person you're looking for to locate a good fit.
- Remember that a person's past job performance is the surest guide to future performance.
- Remember that a good job fit = the right education + the right experience + a compatible personality.
- Beware of the "just like me" trap. Focus on the objective requirements of the job and the candidate's qualifications.

## Tips for screening résumés

- Review the résumé, keeping the job description and requirements in mind.
- Spend the smallest amount of your time on eliminating the least likely candidates and the greatest amount of your time carefully considering the most likely candidates.
- Separate fluff from substance. Focus on the core of the candidate's accomplishments.
- Avoid comparing candidates to each other. Instead, compare each candidate to the high-performer candidate profile and look for a match.
- Be aware of your personal biases and how they may affect the screening process.
- Keep market trends in mind; a shorter employment tenure and/or career and industry crossover is common and accepted in many industries.

## Tips for conducting the interview

- Control the situation. It's your show.
- Don't buy first impressions. You may miss the real person.

- Help interviewees feel at ease at the beginning of the interview. They'll open up and talk more freely.
- Follow the 80/20 rule. Get the candidate to do 80% of the talking. The person asking questions and listening is the person who's in control of the interview.
- Be prepared by formulating the interview questions in advance. Ask questions purposefully.
- Take notes. Put candidates at ease by telling them you will be taking notes before you begin writing.
- Don't make assumptions. Look for repeat patterns of behavior to draw conclusions about the candidate.

## Interview preparation form

Interview Preparation Form		
<p>Use this form to prepare for a hiring interview, review the job profile, and make a list of the key responsibilities and tasks of the job, associated training and/or experience, and personal attributes required to do the job well. For each of the areas you need to explore with the candidate, prepare several questions in advance. After the interview, rate the candidate in each of the key areas on the Decision-Making Matrix Worksheet.</p>		
Job Title:		
Key Responsibilities and Tasks		Associated Training and/or Experience
1. asdasdasdasd		1.
2.		2.
3.		3.
4.		4.
Personal Attributes to Look for:		
Key Areas to Explore	Questions to Ask	Notes
Education	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
Previous Experience	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
Job Accomplishments	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
Skills and Knowledge	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
Personal Attributes	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
Previous Appraisal or Rating	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

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## Decision-making matrix worksheet

Decision-Making Matrix Worksheet							
Use this worksheet to evaluate each job candidate for a particular position. Enter a score for each of the key areas. By tallying the total scores and reviewing your interview notes, you can begin to identify which candidate is the right person for the job.							
Job Title:							
Candidate Name	Key Area Ratings (poor) 1 to 5 (excellent)						TOTAL
	Education	Previous Experience	Job Accomplishments	Skills and Knowledge	Personal Attributes	Previous Appraisal or Rating	
	Notes:						
	Notes:						
	Notes:						
	Notes:						
	Notes:						
	Notes:						
	Notes:						
	Notes:						
	Notes:						

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## Job profile form

<i>Job Profile Form</i>		
<i>Complete this form before you begin interviewing candidates for an open position.</i>		
Job Title:		
Organization:		
Hiring Manager:		
Reporting Manager:		
Compensation:	Hours:	Location:
Job Summary		
Education Requirements		
Experience Requirements		
Personal Characteristics		
Skill and Knowledge Requirements		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
Job Responsibilities and Tasks		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

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## Why Develop Others?

“At the end of the day, you bet on people, not strategies.”

Larry Bossidy

Former CEO, AlliedSignal

In today’s global business environment, markets and regulations change quickly. Competitors constantly innovate. Technological changes are the norm.

In order to outmaneuver the competition and meet the demands of the moment, organizations must be agile. They must execute flawlessly. And they must transform themselves continuously.

Are your leaders ready?

Dr. Noel M. Tichy

Professor

University of Michigan Ross School of Business

We have now entered an era where I don’t care what industry you’re in, you need leaders who



can make decisions, make judgment calls at every single level. All the way down to the interface with the customer.

If you go to a company like Google or any of the high tech companies, a lot of the innovation that Amazon does is happening right at the front line. Go ahead, try it, put it out there, we'll learn from it. That cannot happen if the senior leadership doesn't have a commitment to both develop the leadership capability, but develop the business through engaging people at all levels of the organization.

### Becoming a teaching organization

I like to tell parents that they cannot delegate their responsibility to develop their children. And I think it is the same in an organization. Day in and day out the person that has the biggest impact on people in the organization is the next level above and the associates around and below. And so to build a learning organization I say is not enough. Learning could be, you know we are learning cooking, we are learning this or that, but teaching organizations, when I learned something, I have a responsibility to teach my colleagues.

So everybody takes responsibility for generating new knowledge and it is not enough to be a learner, you then have to translate it into teaching.

### The Virtuous Teaching Cycle

The role of a leader is to ensure that the people who work for them and around them are better every day. There's only one way to make people better. It's to teach them, learn from them, create what I call "virtuous teaching cycles", not command and control.

A virtuous teaching cycle is teach learn, teach learn. And the leader has a responsibility for reducing the hierarchy, for having a point of view to start the discussion, but then to be responsible to hear everyone's voice, get everyone involved in a disciplined way. It is not a free for all. But it is the leader's responsibility to create that virtuous teaching cycle.

A wonderful example of virtuous teaching cycle is the program that Roger Enrico ran at Pepsi, where every one of the 10 vice presidents comes with a business project.

Roger Enrico gets smarter as result of five days with 10 vice presidents, because he's learning from them. He needs to lower the hierarchy. He needs to be open to learning. And in turn, the people participating need to be energized and empowered to come up and engage in problem solving.

Another example is at Best Buy, where every morning in the stores you would bring 20 associates or so together and they would review the profit and loss statement from the day before, what we learned from the different customer segments in our stores, what we can do to improve our performance this day. And they do that every single day. The store manager was learning mostly from the associates on the floor.

That was a virtuous teaching cycle where everybody is teaching everybody, everybody is learning and the result has been an incredible result at Best Buy.

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

- Harvey S. Firestone

Founder, Firestone Tire and Rubber Co

There are clear advantages to leader-led development.

But for many leaders, taking on teaching, coaching, and other development responsibilities can seem daunting. You might avoid taking on these roles due to lack of time, resources, or your own lack of comfort with this role.

The following tips and resources can help you impart valuable learning to your team every day.

To develop others...

- Start with a Teachable Point of View

The first requirement of being able to develop other leaders is to have what I call a teachable point of view. I often give the example of, if I ran a tennis camp and you just came to day one of the tennis camp, I better have a teachable point of view on how I teach tennis. So you are standing there looking at me and it has got four elements. One, the ideas, well how do I teach the backhand, the forehand, the serve, rules of tennis. Then if I am a good tennis coach, I have a set of values. What are the right behaviors I want, how do I want you to dress, how do I want you to behave on the tennis court.

But if that's all I have, what do I do? Show you a power point presentation and then expect you to hit 500 backhands, 500 serves, run around for eight hours. I have to have a teachable point of view on emotional energy. How do I motivate you to buy in to the ideas and values?

On one end of the spectrum it could be I threaten you with corporal punishment, the other I can give you stock options, I can make you feel good about yourself, I can help you develop as a human being, what motivates you.

And then finally, how do I make the tough judgment calls, the yes/no, decisions as the tennis coach, the ball is in, the ball is out. I don't hire consultants and set up a committee, it is yes/no. And the same with running a business, what are the products, services, distribution channels, customer segments that are going to grow top line growth and profitability of the organization.

What are the values that I want everyone in the organization to have, how do I emotionally energize thousands of people, and then how do I make the yes/no, judgments on people and on business issues. So the fundamental building block of being able to develop other leaders is to have that teachable point of view just like the tennis coach.

To develop others...

- Lead with questions

Questions are hugely important because you want to create dialogue and again, what I call a virtuous teaching cycle where the teacher learns from the students and vice versa. Which means everybody ought to be free to ask whatever is on their mind, whatever it will take to get clarity and understanding, but it is not the leader just coming in and freeform asking questions. I believe the leader has a responsibility for framing the discussion, for having as best they can a teachable point of view, they may need help from their people in flushing it out, but they need to set the stage but then it has to be a very interactive, what I call virtuous teaching cycle environment, teach learn, teach learn, teach learn.

To develop others...

- Make it part of your routine

A good example to me of an outstanding leader developing other leaders is Myrtle Potter who at the time I am commenting was Chief Operating Officer of Genentech running the commercial side of the business. And she would take time at the end of every single meeting and do some coaching of the whole team on how we could perform as a team better, and then she would

often take individuals and say, could we spend 10 minutes over a cup of coffee, I want to give you some feedback and coaching on that report that you just presented on or how you are handling a particularly difficult human resource issue, but it was part of her regular routine. And I think the challenge for all of us as leaders is to make that a way of life and it is built into the fabric of how we lead and it is not a one off event, three times a year. It is happening almost every day.

To develop others...

- Make it a priority

One of the biggest challenges in getting people kind of on this path is to overcome some of their own resistance, either fear or the way I view the world I don't have time for this, everybody can make time. Roger Enrico is CEO of Pepsi. He didn't have time to go off for a week at a time and run training sessions. He had to readjust his calendar. So it requires you to look in the mirror and say, is this important. If it is important, of course I can make the time. Then I have to get over my own anxiety on how well I can do it, but it is a commitment to get on the path that says: this is how I am going to drive my own performance and the performance of my colleagues.

To develop others...

- Learn to teach

I think the biggest mistake is to assume you are going to be good at it right off the bat. It is like learning anything else. First time you go out and try and play tennis, good luck. But you got to stay with it and you got to engage your people in helping make you better and them better. And so it is a journey you need to get on, not I am going to do it perfectly when I start out.

If you want to be a great leader who is a great teacher, it's very simple. You have got to dive into the deep end of the pool. But you've got to dive into the pool with preparation. I don't want you drowning. I want you succeeding. It is extraordinarily rewarding for most human beings to teach others. I think once you can turn that switch on, it is self perpetuating. You get a lot of reinforcement, your team is better. You perform better because your performance goes up and it becomes this virtuous teaching cycle.

Your opportunity to develop others

We've heard why developing others can drive greater business results, and how to make the most of your leader-led development efforts. The materials provided in Develop Others enable you to create personalized learning experiences for YOUR team within the flow of their daily activities. Use the guides and projects to engage your team quickly. And to explore how key concepts apply to them in the context of their priorities and goals.

The value of teaching is the performance of the organization is totally dependent on making your people smarter and more aligned every day as the world changes. In the 21st century we are not going to get by with command and control. We are going to have to get by with knowledge creation. The way you create knowledge in an organization is you create these virtuous teaching cycles where you are teaching and learning simultaneously, responding to customer demands and changes, responding to changes in the global environment. My bottom line is if you're not teaching, you're not leading.

A leader's most important role in any organization is making good judgments — well informed, wise decisions about people, strategy and crises that produce the desired outcomes. When a leader shows consistently good judgment, little else matters. When he or she shows poor judgment nothing else matters. In addition to making their own good judgment calls, good leaders develop good judgment among their team members.

**Dr. Noel M. Tichy****Professor, University of Michigan Ross School of Business**

Dr. Noel M. Tichy is Professor of Management and Organizations, and Director of the Global Business Partnership at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. The Global Business Partnership links companies and students around the world to develop and engage business leaders to incorporate global citizenship activities, both environmental projects and human capital development, for those at the bottom of the pyramid. Previously, Noel was head of General Electric's Leadership Center at Crotonville, where he led the transformation to action learning at GE. Between 1985 and 1987, he was Manager of Management Education for GE where he directed its worldwide development efforts at Crotonville. He currently consults widely in both the private and public sectors. He is a senior partner in Action Learning Associates. Noel is author of numerous books and articles, including:

For more information about Noel Tichy, visit <http://www.noeltichy.com>.

## Share an Idea

Leaders are in a unique position to recognize the ideas and tools that are most relevant and useful for their teams. If you only have a few minutes, consider sharing an idea or tool from this topic with your team or peers that is relevant and timely to their situation.

For example, consider sending one of the three recommended ideas or tools below to your team with your comments or questions on how the idea or tool can be of value to your organization. By simply sharing the item, you can easily engage others in important conversations and activities relevant to your goals and priorities.

[Steps for recruiting candidates](#)

[Interview preparation form](#)

[Steps for making the hire](#)

To share an idea, tip, step, or tool with your comments via e-mail, select the EMAIL link in the upper right corner of the page that contains the idea, tip, step, or tool that you wish to share.

## Discussion 1: Getting the information you need

When your team members need to fill an open position, they may fully understand the requirements of the job. But they may be unsure of how to get the information they need during interviews to decide if a candidate would be a good fit for the job. Your people may be wondering, "What topics should I cover during the interview?" and "What questions should I ask?"

If your team members don't ask the right questions and use the right approaches during job interviews, they can't evaluate candidates effectively. At best, that means wasting everyone's time. At worst, it means possibly hiring the wrong person for the job.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to get the information they need to make a well-informed hiring decision.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Getting the Information You Need](#)

[Discussion Guide: Getting the Information You Need](#)

[Discussion Slides: Getting the Information You Need \(optional\)](#)

[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

*Note:* If your team has only a few members who currently or may need to make hiring decisions, consider partnering with a colleague to co-lead this discussion for your combined teams.

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

## Discussion 2: Evaluating job candidates

When your team members need to evaluate job candidates they've interviewed, they may be wondering how, exactly, to identify the *best* person for the job. There are many considerations to weigh, and your people may have interviewed numerous candidates for the position in question.

The key to tackling this challenge is to take a disciplined approach to evaluating the candidates. Ranking each candidate's fit with each requirement of the job helps. So does gaining familiarity with — and avoiding — common mistakes hiring managers make while evaluating job candidates.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to evaluate job candidates effectively — so they ultimately pick the right person for the job.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Evaluating Job Candidates](#)

[Discussion Guide: Evaluating Job Candidates](#)

[Discussion Slides: Evaluating Job Candidates \(optional\)](#)

[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

*Note:* If your team has only a few members who currently or may need to make hiring decisions, consider partnering with a colleague to co-lead this discussion for your combined teams.

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

## Start a Group Project

Just like any change effort, successfully incorporating new skills and behaviors into one's daily activities and habits takes time and effort. After reviewing or discussing the concepts in this topic, your direct reports will still need your support to fully apply new concepts and skills. They will need to overcome a variety of barriers including a lack of time, lack of confidence, and a fear of making mistakes. They will also need opportunities to hone their skills and break old habits. To help ensure their success, you can provide safe opportunities for individuals and your team as a whole to practice

and experiment with new skills and behaviors on the job.

For example, to encourage the adoption of new norms, you can provide your team members with coaching, feedback, and additional time to complete tasks that require the use of new skills. Management approaches such as these will encourage team members to experiment with new skills until they become proficient.

Group learning projects provide another valuable technique for accelerating team members' development of new behaviors. A group learning project is an on-the-job activity aimed at providing team members with direct experience implementing their new knowledge and skills. Through a learning project, team members discover how new concepts work in the context of their situation, while simultaneously having a direct and tangible impact on the organization.

The documents below provide steps, tips, and a template for initiating a group learning project with your team, along with two project recommendations for this topic.

Download resources:

[Tips for Initiating and Supporting a Learning Project](#)

[Learning Project Plan Template](#)

[Learning Project: Define Requirements for a Position in Your Group](#)

[Learning Project: Prepare for a Hiring Interview](#)

## The Definitive Guide to Recruiting in Good Times and Bad

[Claudio Fernández-Aráoz, Boris Groysberg, and Nitin Nohria. "The Definitive Guide to Recruiting in Good Times and Bad." \*Harvard Business Review\*, May 2009.](#)

[Download file](#)

### Summary

Few companies are thinking about hiring right now, but that's a mistake. If history is any guide, staffing will become a front-burner issue once the economic upheaval eases. Even now, companies are running into staffing problems in emerging markets, and many will have to find talented replacements for baby-boom retirees. Will they be able to meet their needs? Not likely, say Fernández-Aráoz of Egon Zehnder and Harvard Business School professors Groysberg and Nohria. Their research, conducted with scores of CEOs, HR executives, and recruiters, found current hiring practices to be haphazard at best and inept at worst. And no wonder. Ignorant of their staffing needs, most companies treat hiring top-level executives as an emergency. That leaves them little choice. One study found that nearly a quarter of the time, the executive selected was the only candidate considered. Far too few companies conduct reference checks; far too many rely on gut reactions when judging qualifications and cultural fit.

## What It Means to Work Here

[Tamara J. Erickson and Lynda Gratton. "What It Means to Work Here." \*Harvard Business Review\*, March 2007.](#)

[Download file](#)

## Summary

What distinguishes a company that has deeply engaged and committed employees from another one that doesn't? It's not a certain compensation scheme or talent-management practice. Instead, it's the ability to express to current and potential employees what makes the organization unique. Companies with highly engaged employees articulate their values and attributes through "signature experiences"—visible, distinctive elements of the work environment that send powerful messages about the organization's aspirations and about the skills, stamina, and commitment employees will need in order to succeed there. Whole Foods Market, for example, uses a team-based hiring and orientation process to convey to new employees the company's emphasis on collaboration and decentralization. At JetBlue, the reservation system is run by agents from their homes, a signature experience that boosts employees' satisfaction and productivity. Companies that successfully create and communicate signature experiences understand that not all workers want the same things.

## We Googled You

Diane Coutu, Jeffrey A. Joerres, Michael Fertik, John G. Palfrey Jr., and Danah M. Boyd. "We Googled You." *Harvard Business Review*, June 2007.

[Download file](#)

## Summary

As the CEO of Hathaway Jones, an American luxury apparel retailer, Fred Westen has spent the past four years struggling to revamp his company's stodgy image and boost flagging sales. He's just announced an ambitious plan to elbow in on China's fast-growing luxury goods market when he gets a call from an old prep school friend. Fred agrees to meet his friend's daughter, Mimi Brewster, to see whether she might be able to head up the company's flagship store in Shanghai. Fred is impressed by Mimi's CV, and the interview goes off without a hitch, but a routine Google search turns up information about her that could affect the company's performance in China. News stories and photos reveal that when Mimi was fresh out of college, she'd participated in nonviolent but vocal demonstrations—including one in front of China's San Francisco consulate—against the World Trade Organization. As the vice president of HR urges caution, Fred ponders hiring practices in the digital age. He knows that nothing is secret anymore—especially among younger people, who brazenly post the most intimate details of their lives for the world to see. If he hires Mimi, and her past conduct becomes widely known, his company's expansion overseas could be set back. But rising stars like Mimi don't walk in the door every day. Should Fred hire her despite her online history?

Commenting on this fictional case study are John G. Palfrey, Jr., a professor and the executive director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School; Jeffrey A. Joerres, the CEO of Manpower; Danah M. Boyd, a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Berkeley, and a corporate adviser; and Michael Fertik, the CEO of ReputationDefender.